

HEMSWORTH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1908.

HEMSWORTH:

C. E. Turner, Printer and Stationer, Post Office.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29420994>

HEMSWORTH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, 1908.

Presented 18th February, 1909.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my second Annual Report dealing with the health and sanitary condition of the district for the year ended 31st December, 1908.

POPULATION.—I am adopting an estimate of 30,700 as the population at the middle of the year. This figure is lower than the orthodox arithmetical estimate, but I think it is more likely to represent the actual conditions.

BIRTHS.—The year's total reached 1,180 (males 586, females 594), corresponding to a birth-rate of 38·4 per thousand inhabitants. This rate is considerably higher than that of 1907, being in fact about equal to the average of the last 10 years. The number of illegitimate births included in the above was 53.

DEATHS.—The number registered in the district was 472, but this has to be increased by 21 because that number of residents from this district died in public institutions beyond the area. This augmented figure (493) yields a death-rate of 16·0 per thousand compared with 17·1 in the previous year. I think this rate of mortality must be regarded as satisfactory, considering the character of the district, although there is no doubt that considerable saving might be effected in the first year of life. Of the 493 deaths, 267 were males and 226 females.

INFANT MORTALITY.—The babies who died before completing their twelfth month were 180 in number, or in the ratio of 152 per thousand births. This rate, too, is less than the average of ten years, but one ought to aim at a considerably lower rate. The following is an analysis of the causes of these early deaths :—

(1)	Premature Birth and early wasting	66 deaths.
(2)	Diarrhoeal diseases	39 „
(3)	Bronchitis and Pneumonia	32 „
(4)	Measles and Whooping Cough	7 „
(5)	Other causes	36 „

It is with regard to items (2) and (3) that a great saving could probably be effected by the exercise of simple homely care at the proper time. It is not designedly, but through ignorance, that this care is withheld, and in my opinion the only hope lies in a scheme for getting into personal touch with the home and guiding the mothers into right lines. Such a scheme does not yet form part of the public health machinery of this district, though it is worthy of record that during 1908 District Nurses have been established by voluntary efforts at Hemsworth and South Elmsall, and one is contemplated for Kinsley.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES.—The seven principal zymotic diseases produced a death-rate of 2·1 per thousand, which compares very favourably with past records. The deaths embraced in this calculation were small-pox 0, measles 13, scarlet fever 0, whooping cough 7, diphtheria 3, enteric fever 9, diarrhoea 34.

Considering the constant risk of importing infection with immigrant families from other districts, this freedom from epidemic disease has been remarkable.

MEASLES became more or less epidemic at Kinsley in May and June, and later on at South Kirkby. In both districts school closure was resorted to and the prevalence died out.

WHOOPING COUGH.—Cases occurred in several localities throughout the spring and summer, but it was at no time epidemic. Deaths took place at Hemsworth (3), South Elmsall (3), and Ackworth (1).

DIARRHŒA was responsible for 34 deaths, of which no less than 29 occurred in babies under 1 year of age. This subject has already been referred to under the head of infantile mortality.

Notifiable Diseases.

SCARLET FEVER.—The district was never quite free from the disease, but at no time did it become epidemic. The total cases notified were 65, of which 25 were in Brierley Parish (Grime-thorpe), and 23 in Hemsworth. Fifty-four of the cases were removed to hospital, and not a single death took place.

DIPHTHERIA.—No special localisation of this disease occurred. The 23 cases and 3 deaths form a very satisfactory record for this district, although in excess of the previous year's abnormally low figures.

ENTERIC FEVER.—In the somewhat high total of 43 cases are included two outbreaks accounting for 20 notifications, the rest being unconnected and sporadic cases.

One of the outbreaks was at Ackworth School in the Spring, when some seven cases occurred presumably by personal spread from an undiscovered imported case. In the Autumn a more serious outbreak occurred at South Kirkby extending to 13 cases before it finished in December. As a result of investigations, the main drain was found to be blocked owing to a general subsidence from colliery workings. The Council at once had the sewer relaid, and the whole system well flushed. Attention was also given to the cleaning out and disinfection of the middens and gullies, the isolation of cases in hospital, and the disinfection of the houses. I think it is more than likely that the ordinary house-flies (which were very numerous here at the commencement of the outbreak) acted as carriers of the disease after the ash-pits became infected. At all events, it is well known that these pests make the middens their breeding places, and, flitting to and fro between the midden and the domestic food-store, they are capable of inoculating such articles as milk with the germs of typhoid fever and diarrhœa. Preventative action should therefore be directed to the breeding and feeding places of the flies, by improving the type of refuse receptacle

and the efficiency of scavenging on the one hand, and by inculcating on the other hand a better method of protecting the food supply (and particularly milk) from microbial contamination of every kind.

Other Deaths.

PHTHISIS caused more deaths than in recent years, viz: 26. Of these, 21 were adults between 25 and 65 years of age. We have no system of notification of this infectious disease, and no provision for isolating cases. Consequently all that can be done is to offer to disinfect dwellings after the death of a phthisical patient.

Nine deaths were ascribed to CANCER, as compared with 15 in the previous year.

ACCIDENT is a fruitful cause of death in this district with its many coal pits, quarries, and railway lines. During the year 21 deaths were entered in the accident column.

Isolation Hospital.—The cases removed to the Brierley Hospital totalled 97, namely—Diphtheria 13, Scarlet Fever 54, Enteric Fever 30. Of the latter, 6 proved fatal, the disease being of a severe type. Nevertheless, the utility of the institution as a means of preventing spread cannot be doubted by anyone who is acquainted with the lack of accommodation for home treatment of infectious cases in this district.

It might be recorded that the installation of gas at the hospital has proved of great advantage to both staff and patients.

General Sanitary Notes.—The following are the items, not already dealt with, which the Local Government Board require me to include in this report :—

CHARACTER OF DISTRICT.—The district comprises the whole of the 24 parishes forming the Hemsworth Union,—an area of some 54 square miles, of which the town of Hemsworth is about the centre. The Yorkshire coal-field has been increasingly developed in this district during the last two or three decades, with the result that coal-mining is now the principal occupation, although agriculture and stone quarrying still employ a considerable number.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION varies throughout the district, from the scattered rural cottages to the compact aggregations of miners' dwellings. The latest additions consist of a superior class forming a kind of model village near Hemsworth pit.

It may be mentioned that the recent influx of population, due to the development of this pit, has made itself felt in Hemsworth where a considerable number of miners are accommodated as lodgers with other families who have really no room to spare. This tendency to overcrowding will no doubt quickly right itself. No special action has been taken during the year under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, but a good deal of attention has been paid to the condition of back-yards and streets,—an important sanitary matter in which steady progress is being made.

WATER SUPPLY.—Eight parishes are now supplied with Barnsley water and 4 with the Pontefract supply. During the year a Government Inquiry was held in regard to loans required for the augmentation of the service, including the construction of an additional reservoir at Ringstone Hill. Samples examined in regard to plumbo-solvent action have proved satisfactory.

MILK AND FOOD SUPPLY.—The district for the most part produces its own milk, and also exports a considerable quantity to neighbouring towns. The cowsheds are duly registered and inspected, and are reported to be in fair sanitary state. In one instance a tuberculous milch cow was promptly disposed of on discovery.

Some of the local slaughter-houses do not conform to present day requirements and, in my opinion, it would be an advantage to have a public abattoir in the centre of the district.

SEWERAGE.—All the populous centres possess sewage schemes, the maintenance and extension of which are matters constantly engaging the activities of the Council.

SCAVENGING in the parish of Hemsworth is done by the Council's own staff, in the other important parishes by contract, and elsewhere by owners and tenants. Cases of neglected scavenging are promptly dealt with when discovered.

SANITARY INSPECTION.—For this purpose the district is divided into two,—each having an inspector devoting his whole time to the work. The total number of nuisances dealt with during the year was 217.

SCHOOLS.—The medical inspection of school children is in the hands of the County Council, and consequently I cannot report on it, except to say that something more than the mere calling of attention to physical defects is required, and some means should be provided for seeing that the various physical defects are removed. The out-patient departments of the available hospitals are already becoming so overcrowded that they cannot cope with the work that has been thrown on them.

During the year, the presence of scabies at Grimethorpe caused considerable worry. A good many families were affected and the cases were not confined to the school children. In consultation with the County Medical Officer vigorous measures were adopted to stamp out the disease among scholars, including closure and disinfection of the school, destruction of infected books, disinfection of patient's clothing, etc. A handbill was also circulated giving advice on the nature of the ailment and the methods of prevention. The Council offered to supply disinfectant ointment and materials free of charge, but little advantage was taken of it, hence the subsidence of the disease was not at all speedy. There were no means of getting householders to persevere with the necessary measures, and altogether the experience confirms what has already been said in favour of having health visitors who could go into the homes and see that effective means are taken.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—The report under this head is meagre,—this being essentially a rural district where mining is the occupation. A register of workshops is kept and visits of inspection are made, but there is nothing of special importance to report.

MIDWIVES ACT.—This is also under the administration of the County Council. Two cases of puerperal fever were the subject of investigation during the year,—which is not a large

number in relation to the total births attended. If the Act is rigorously administered next year to the exclusion of all midwives who are not enrolled, there will be a very serious dearth of women available to attend confinements.

CONCLUSION.—In concluding this report, I should like to express my thanks for courtesy and consideration extended to me by the Council and for the assistance of my fellow officers.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

H. P. WILTSHIRE.

Table I.

Vital Statistics for 1908 and previous years.

	Total Births.		Nett Deaths		Infant Mortality	Zymotic Death
	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Rate.	Rate.
1898	755	36.7	374	18.2	183	4.3
1899	772	35.9	365	17.0	154	3.8
1900	870	38.5	386	17.1	175	2.8
1901	877	37.1	401	16.9	179	2.3
1902	936	37.8	438	17.7	187	2.5
1903	1044	40.1	435	16.7	160	2.6
1904	1114	40.9	489	17.9	148	3.3
1905	1106	38.8	430	15.1	129	2.0
1906	1148	38.9	421	14.3	139	2.7
1907	1056	35.2	514	17.1	160	2.9
Average for 10 years	968	38.1	425	16.7	160	2.9
1908	1180	38.4	493	16.0	152	2.1

Table II.

Deaths in different Parishes.

PARISH.				Year 1907.	Year 1908.
Western Registration Sub-District.	{	Brierley (including Grimethorpe)	...	41	53
		Great Houghton	...	28	26
		Havercroft	...	22	11
		Hemsworth	...	152	139
		Huntwick, Nostell, and Foulby	...	7	11
		Little Houghton	...	9	9
		Ryhill...	...	35	35
		Shafton	...	13	15
		South Hiendley...	...	13	13
		Winterset	...	—	3
				<hr/> 320	<hr/> 315
Eastern Registration Sub-District.	{	Ackworth	...	51	44
		Badsworth	...	3	0
		Hamphall Stubbs	...	0	1
		Hessle and Hill Top	...	3	2
		Kirk Smeaton	...	5	3
		Little Smeaton	...	1	1
		North Elmsall	...	5	5
		South Elmsall	...	24	40
		South Kirkby	...	97	70
		Skelbrook	...	1	1
		Thorp Audlin	...	2	3
		Upton	...	1	5
		Walden Stubbs...	...	1	2
West Hardwick...	...	—	1		
				<hr/> 194	<hr/> 178

Table III.

Cases of Infectious Disease Notified during 1908.

	Notified at different Ages.							Sub- Districts		Removed to Hospital.		
	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 & upwards	Western.	Eastern.	Western.	Eastern.	Total.
Small-pox ... ..	...	..	...	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cholera ... ..	...	...	...	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria (including Membraneous Croup)	24	..	7	13	2	2	..	15	9	8	5	13
Erysipelas	32	2	1	2	5	17	5	15	17	...	...	...
Scarlet Fever	65	3	24	32	5	1	..	56	9	48	6	54
Typhus Fever... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Enteric Fever... ..	43	..	1	16	13	13	..	14	29	12	18	30
Relapsing Fever ... ..	...	...	...	...	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Continued Fever ... ..	...	...	...	..	..	...	...	..	...	...	...	...
Puerperal Fever	1	...	..	..	..	1	..	1	...	...	..	...
Plague... ..	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	..	...
	165	5	33	63	25	34	5	101	64	68	29	97

Table IV.
Causes of Death, 1908.

CAUSE.	Deaths at all Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	TOTALS.	
								Western.	Eastern.
Small Pox - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Measles - - -	13	2	10	1	...	...	...	5	8
Scarlet Fever - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Whooping Cough - - -	7	5	2	...	...	...	...	3	4
Diphtheria & Membraneous Croup - - -	3	...	2	1	...	...	...	2	1
Croup - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Typhus, Enteric, or other continued Fevers - - -	9	...	...	2	3	4	...	7	2
Epidemic Influenza - - -	4	...	...	...	...	3	1	2	2
Cholera - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Plague - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diarrhœa - - -	34	29	4	...	...	...	1	23	11
Enteritis - - -	18	10	4	2	1	...	1	5	13
Puerperal Fever - - -	3	...	...	...	1	2	...	3	...
Erysipelas - - -	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Phthisis - - -	26	...	1	1	3	21	...	18	8
Other tubercular diseases - - -	18	5	9	2	1	1	...	12	6
Cancer, malignant disease - - -	9	...	...	...	...	5	4	6	3
Bronchitis - - -	45	16	11	1	1	8	8	30	15
Pneumonia - - -	45	16	15	1	...	12	1	28	17
Pleurisy - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other diseases of Respiratory Organs - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Alcoholism—Cirrhosis of Liver - - -	3	...	...	...	...	3	...	2	1
Venereal Diseases - - -	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...
Premature Birth - - -	27	27	...	...	...	...	...	14	13
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition - - -	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...
Heart Diseases - - -	41	1	...	...	2	24	14	27	14
Accidents - - -	21	3	1	1	2	10	4	13	8
Suicides - - -	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...
All other Causes - - -	163	65	20	3	4	31	40	111	52
Totals	493	180	79	15	18	127	74	315	178

Table V.

**Cases notified in each Township during the
Year 1908.**

Township.		Small-pox.	Cholera.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Erysipelas.	Scarlet Fever.	Typhus.	Enteric Fever.	Continued or Relapsing Fever	Puerperal Fever.	Total.
Ackworth	-	6	...	5	3	...	8	...	...	22
Badsworth	-
Brierley	-	1	...	1	25	...	1	...	1	29
Great Houghton	-	2	2	...	1	...	...	5
Hamphall Stubbs	
Havercroft	-	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Hemsworth	-	2	...	8	23	...	8	...	...	41
Hessle & Hill Top	
Huntwick, Foulby, and Nostell	-	3	...	2	3	...	...	...	...	8
Kirk Smeaton	-
Little Houghton	-
Little Smeaton	-
North Elmsall	-	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Ryhill	-	6	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	8
Shafton	-	1	3	...	1	...	...	5
South Elmsall	-	1	...	2	1	...	5	...	...	9
South Hiendley	-	3	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	4
South Kirkby	-	1	...	9	5	...	16	...	...	31
Skelbrook	-	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Thorp Audlin	-
Upton	-
Walden Stubbs	-
West Hardwick	-
Wintersett	-
Total	-	24	...	32	65	...	43	...	1	165

Table VI.

**Cases admitted to Isolation Hospitals
during 1908.**

Township.		Small-pox.	Diphtheria.	Scarlet Fever.	Enteric Fever.	Total.
Ackworth	-	...	1	1	...	2
Badsworth	-
Brierley	-	20	...	20
Great Houghton	-	2	1	3
Hamphall Stubbs	-
Havercroft	-
Hemsworth	-	...	3	22	8	33
Hessle and Hill Top	-	...	1	1	...	2
Huntwick, Foulby, & Nostell
Kirk Smeaton	-
Little Houghton	-
Little Smeaton	-
North Elmsall	-	...	1	...	...	1
Ryhill	-	...	3	...	1	4
Shafton	-	4	1	5
South Elmsall	-	...	1	...	3	4
South Hiendley	-	...	2	...	1	3
South Kirkby	-	...	1	4	15	20
Skelbrook	-
Thorpe Audlin	-
Upton	-
Walden Stubbs	-
West Hardwick	-
Winterset	-
Total cases isolated		...	13	54	30	97
Deaths in Hospital		6	6

NOTE.—The Small-pox Hospital is situated at South Kirkby.
The General Isolation Hospital at Brierley.

